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he knows to be false," and a disagreeable and talented young materialist who out-Herods Comte and is a chosen Philistine—these, and a few others, make up the tale of the guests. And these incongruous elements suddenly fall a-talking on the Aim of Life.

"The Aim of Life is progress," says the Comtist, and "progress is such improvement as can be verified by statistics, just as education is such knowledge as can be tested by examinations." Could anything be more delicious than this bit, said, be it remembered, into the ear of Ruskin? Here is another: "Think, too, of that flower of Christian civilization, the innuendo. That is simply the adroit saying under difficulties of what, but for Christianity, every one would have taken for granted." Again, "What is life itself?"

It is hardly necessary to say that no definite conclusions are reached, such as would be of use in a Kindergarten, for example. "The New Republic" is in many ways a modern prose Faust. The same questionings are there, but they are not fierce and wild as with Faust.

"Was man nicht weiss, das eben brauchte man,
Und was man weiss, kann man nicht brauchen."

Here they are such as one may hear from one's next neighbor at dinner, if one chooses to ask. The fierceness of Faust's questions was a hopeful sign, but the apathy of these justifies the melancholy pessimism of our generation.

"The New Republic" is an extraordinary first attempt, and shows nothing of the tyro, except a marvelous freshness and vigor. It seems that few things are too much to expect from the same hand.

7.—*Gerrit Smith: a Biography.* By OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1878. 12mo, pp. 381.

WE have read this book with some amusement; not that there was anything very entertaining in the life and opinions of the anti-slavery protagonist to whom it is devoted, but because of the extraordinary difficulty which the author seems to have experienced in making a eulogistic life out of the materials at his hands. Between the lines we can see that Mr. Frothingham is always conscious that to the great mass of readers the traits of character which he recalls and describes will be given quite different names from those which he applies, and he is continually engaged in a struggle with the English language and his own conscience in consequence. There

does not to us seem to be any great difficulty in understanding what sort of a man Gerrit Smith was. A rich landed proprietor, belonging to a family of much local consequence, but of little real prominence except from its wealth; possessed of a good deal of natural ability (the feat of arguing and winning a fugitive-slave case, performed by any one not a lawyer, must be regarded as strong evidence of this), and a great desire to benefit his kind, he, early in life, was placed in a position of such superiority to all his associates and acquaintances, that he developed an unbounded conceit, by means of which he rapidly persuaded himself that, without further preparation, he was qualified to instruct the world on any subject that it was worth while to discuss. This he accordingly proceeded to do during the remainder of his life; and as he was really sincere, and identified himself with a great cause, he ended by persuading a large number of people that he was really a Heaven-sent counselor. But whenever he actually descended to the ordinary fields of human activity (outside of business affairs, for which he inherited an aptitude), he invariably made confusion worse confounded. Witness his scheme of negro colonization; his career in Congress; his proposal for a national "police," to be composed of the best and most enlightened citizens, as a substitute for the army. Looking over his various professions of faith, there is hardly any conceivable plan for the improvement of the human race, that experience shows to be wildly visionary and impracticable, that did not at one time or other meet his cordial approval. He was in favor of agrarianism, opposed to the whole system of property recognized in Anglo-Saxon countries; he longed for woman-suffrage, believed in the abolition of dram-drinking by law; he maintained that slavery was not recognized by the Constitution of the United States; he insisted on the abolition of custom-houses; his social and political faiths were a bundle of flagrant absurdities. We should have expected a friendly biographer to pass lightly over the eccentricity which induced Mr. Smith to believe himself to be right on all these points, and all the rest of the world wrong; but no, Mr. Frothingham reproduces all his most crazy schemes at length, and even appears to gloat over them, although we do not understand that he considers them to have been practical. A biographer must be filled, of course, with an interest in his subject, but it surely ought not to lead him to the point of making his subject ridiculous.
